

Air Force, AFMC approve scientist, engineer bonus

BY TECH SGT. CARL NORMAN

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Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, Ohio (AFMCNS)—Two years of fighting for ever-decreasing budget dollars recently paid off for Air Force Materiel Command as Air Force officials approved retention bonuses for civilian scientists and engineers and their military counterparts.

The bonuses come after AFMC experts put all their cards on the table regarding what's been called a critical scientist and engineer shortage to Air Force leaders during summits at the Pentagon, the latest being held Dec. 6, 2001.

Bob Ditommaso, program manager in AFMC's engineering directorate working scientist and engineer issues, said Gen. Lester Lyles, AFMC commander, proved a great advocate for pushing the command's situation through to Air Force leaders.

"He strongly indicated we need an advocate for the workforce and had to do something right now to correct the situation," Ditommaso said. "If AFMC did not push these issues through to the Pentagon, they could very well have died on the vine."

As a result of the summit and other communications, civilian electrical, electronic, aeronautical and mechanical engineers working at AFMC's three air logistics centers will see a 10 percent increase in basic salary starting in July. Air logistics center engineers in civilian grades GS 5-12 in the targeted group will receive the bonus courtesy of a group retention allowance.

The three air logistics centers are Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker AFB, Okla.; Ogden Air Logistics Center at Hill AFB, Utah; and Warner Robins Air Logistics Center at Robins AFB, Ga.

On the other side of the house, AFMC's military scientists, developmental engineers, acquisition program managers, civil engineers and communications and information officers qualify for a \$10,000 per year retention bonus under the Air Force's Critical Skills Retention Bonus Program. The bonus is paid for a maximum of four years or \$40,000.

Ditommaso said the Critical Skills Retention Bonus goes to military officers across the Air Force with four to 13 years commissioned service who are willing to commit to serving up to four more years in the military.

Both the civilian and military bonuses come as the Air Force is short an estimated 2,700 scientists and engineers, or about 20 percent of its 13,300 authorizations. Polly Sweet, AFMC's personnel management and workforce shaping chief, said in the next five to seven years the command, which employs the lion's share of Air

Force scientists and engineers, will need to recruit 3,300 civilian engineers to allow it to keep America's warfighters on the cutting edge of technology.

"We rely on a strong Air Force scientist and engineer workforce to provide overwhelming technological dominance on the battlefield," said Air Force Secretary James Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper in a memo to the Air Force scientist and engineer workforce. "Our ongoing efforts to counter world terrorism vividly show the importance of advanced technologies in successful air and space operations. Our ability to conceive, produce, deploy and sustain these capabilities is directly linked to our scientist and engineer workforce."

The joint memo described actions Air Force officials elected to take to remedy the shortage following the Dec. 6, 2001 summit. Retention bonuses along with identifying a scientist and engineer functional manager and tasking him to stand up a career field management staff to lead career development and sustainment activities for the entire workforce topped the summit agenda.

"To fill the manning shortage, we directed support of the funded workforce accession and retention initiatives and we will continue to seek funding for several others," Roche and Jumper said in their memo. "In addition, we directed our staffs to pursue legislative authority to initiate several other new programs designed to recruit, reward and retain scientists and engineers."

If the current scientist and engineer shortage continues, Sweet said more events like what recently happened at Hill AFB could become reality.

"A significant number of civilian engineers in the F-16 Avionics and Radar Support Office there resigned all at once to go to work for a private contractor," she said. "That put a big dent in our ability to do our mission. As a result we had to contract some of that office's work out which cost us more money in the long run."

The civilian group retention bonus is slated to be in employees' first paycheck in July. The program will be re-evaluated every year to determine its effectiveness.

Military members eligible for the critical skills retention bonus can start receiving their annual payments in the March - April time frame. Officers who become eligible for the CSRB before Sept. 30 have until Aug. 31 to take advantage of the bonus.

For more information on these retention bonuses, call your military personnel fight or civilian personnel office.

5 officer careers to get bonus

More than 6,000 officers in five critical skill career fields are eligible for up to four years of a retention bonus at \$10,000 per year from the Air Force's Critical Skills Retention Bonus Program.

People who may qualify are scientists, developmental engineers, acquisition program managers, civil engineers and communications and information officers with four to 13 years commissioned service who are willing to commit to serving up to four more years.

Most officers who qualify for the

bonus will receive the standard four-year active duty service commitment that runs concurrently with any other service commitments. The exception is officers who have completed 11, 12 or 13 years of commissioned service, said Vande Hey. These officers would receive three-, two- and one-year active duty service commitments based on corresponding agreements at the same rate of \$10,000 a year.

For more information, call the Air Force Contact Center toll free at 866-229-7074 or DSN 665-5000.



Photo by Dennis Carlson

Former commander speaks at tribute

Col. (Brig. Gen. selectee) Polly Peyer, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center vice commander, speaks at the 2003 Tribute to Women in the Military, March 7. Peyer's speech on legacy, adversity and diversity, reflected on the increase of women in the armed forces, the determination of women in the past who joined service and how ethnic diversity in the military enhanced the ability of women's equality in the military. Peyer was 377th Air Base Wing commander from June 1999-Sept. 2000. Announced at the luncheon were the recipients of the Maj. T.H. Baca Award given to Maj. Dana Smith of the Air Force Inspection Agency and Therese G. Sanchez of the 150th Fighter Wing at the New Mexico Air National Guard.



Photo by R. Steve Milligan

Restoring the land
Heavy equipment operated by Foster Wheeler Environmental Corporation puts the finishing touches on the cap at Landfill 08. The cap is a natural earth cover. Landfill 08 is completed now and awaiting revegetation. Two other landfill site projects are on hold because of a Corrective Measure Study requested by the New Mexico Environment Department.

Kirtland AFB focuses on cleanup of high-risk sites

BY R. STEVE MILLIGAN
377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs
The Kirtland AFB Installation Restoration Program is focusing efforts and resources on cleaning up the remaining high relative risk sites. Kirtland AFB's Installation Restoration Program sites are categorized as low, medium and high relative risk based on three factors, contaminants present, risk to human and ecological environment and risk of migration to ground water. All sites are listed on the base's Part B Permit under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Cleanup sites are referred to as

Corrective Action Units. Currently Kirtland AFB's only high relative risk Installation Restoration Program sites associated with our Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Part B Permit include three landfills, LF-01, LF-02 and LF-08 and two sewage lagoons known as site WP-26. The sewage lagoons are a mile and a half southeast of the main runway of the Albuquerque International Airport and northwest of the Trestle Aircraft Testing Facility. The lagoons have not been used in 16 years and were put in use in 1962 as part of a water conservation system to irrigate the golf

course. A Corrective Measure Study is currently underway to determine the best method to cleanup the site. In the area of the sewage lagoons, there is a groundwater contamination area approximately 1.1 miles long by one-half mile wide, identified as site ST-105. The contamination consists of nitrates and trichloroethylene. The source of the contamination has not been determined but the lagoons are being looked at as a possible source. Another possible source was a city of Albuquerque sewage line break in 1994 in the same area where an estimated 100 million gallons of raw sewage was

discharged over a five-day period. That line could have been leaking for years before the break. Another area of high relative risk involves capping three former landfills. Capping prevents contaminants that might be in the landfills from reaching groundwater. Capping Landfill 08 has been completed except for revegetation. Landfills 01 and 02 were scheduled to be completed this year but have been put on hold because of a Corrective Measure Study requested by N.M. Environment Department.

Project fortifies Eubank Gate

BY 2ND LT. KELLEY FINCHER
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You won't see them, but the Army Core of Engineers is working hard to rebuild a bigger and stronger Eubank Gate.

According to Mike Beyer, the project engineer, the new gate has the ability to stop a 6,000-pound vehicle going 30 mph. Its primary objective is to protect the gate at night when it is not manned. In addition to the fortified gate, the project also includes two side gates; one for pedestrians and one for bicycles. Funding for the gate came from anti-terrorism and force protection funds in an effort to harden military

gates after September 11th. "One of the main terrorist threats is a moving vehicle," said John Breeden, the senior engineer for Chugach Management Services. Breeden cited the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Beirut that killed 241 Americans. A truck armed with explosives destroyed the barracks after crashing through the security gate. "That threat is the type this gate is designed for," Breeden went on to say.

To avoid base traffic, construction is after 6 p.m. and on the weekends. The gate is scheduled to be finished around the end of the month. There are additional plans to improve the guard shacks at the Eubank, Wyoming, Gibson and Carlisle gates. These plans include adding bullet-proof glass and hardening of walls. The project is still awaiting funding.